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ABSTRACT

The Chicago (Illinois) School Reform Act of 1988 (Public Act 85-1418) mandated that each school in the city's public school system prepare a three-year school improvement plan. This report summarizes the most salient features of 539 plans in the form of the following goals: (1) improved achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, sciences, and higher-order thinking; (2) improved attendance; (3) increased high school graduation rates; (4) decreased retention in grade; (5) provision of a common learning experience reflecting high expectations for all students; (6) universal preschool; (7) reduced class size; (8) athletic programs encouraging pride, and a reduction in the number of dropouts; (9) preparation for transition to employment; (10) preparation for transition to further education; (11) enhanced foreign language and international studies programs; (12) programs fostering creative expression; (13) adequate services for special needs students; (14) curricula meeting college entrance criteria; (15) provision of adequate counseling; (16) staff development opportunities; (17) strengthening of teachers' professional development opportunities; (18) strengthening of teachers' professional authority concerning instruction and teaching methods; (19) increased parental involvement; (20) training of parents to assist their children to learn effectively; and (21) increased participation and support of the community, businesses, and other local institutions and individuals. The following topics are also discussed: (1) curriculum; (2) staffing and resources; (3) working conditions; (4) educational opportunity; and (5) monitoring implementation of the plan. (AF)

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# REPORT

## RESEARCH, EVALUATION & PLANNING

# THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS OF 1990

***What the Schools Will Do***

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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**CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Ted D. Kimbrough**
**General Superintendent of Schools**

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# THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS OF 1990:

## What The Schools Will Do

Prepared by
Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning
Chicago Public Schools

December 1990

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# FOREWORD

This document provides an overview of the school improvement plans of 1990. It highlights the multitude of initiatives, big and small, that the schools plan to undertake to improve the education of children. I hope these ideas will suggest others and spark further growth in our schools.

I want to stress that the Chicago Public Schools' commitment to school reform remains unchanged, despite the recent ruling of the Illinois Supreme Court that the reform law is unconstitutional.

The local school councils can be especially proud of their accomplishments, since they had been in existence only a short time before the plans had to be completed and there were other demands on the council members' time.

The school improvement plans are not static; they will grow and change as schools learn what works and what does not. The process of this learning will vary from school to school--growth takes time and requires patience.

I hope that the ideas described in this report will serve as a resource and encourage schools to make even better plans as they begin the next round of planning for school improvement.

Ted D. Kimbrough
General Superintendent of Schools

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To read and summarize 539 school improvement plans was an interesting challenge and a large undertaking. It involved the effort of parents, local school council members, teachers, and staff. The following people read the plans and helped to summarize them or to tally improvement strategies.

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# INTRODUCTION

A revolution occurred in Chicago in October 1989. Some 5,400 individuals were elected to direct and oversee the city's public schools. Over 3,200 of these are the parents whose children attend the schools. The governing bodies have the power to select and hire their principals, approve the schools' expenditure and improvement plan, and advise the principal and staff on other matters, including textbook selection.

The school reform law of 1988, Public Act 85-1418, mandates that each school prepare a three-year school improvement plan. The principal, in consultation with the Local School Council (LSC), school staff, parents, and community residents, prepares the plan. The LSC approves it. The first school improvement plans were to be ready by mid-May of 1990, a mere six months after the LSCs were elected.[1]

This report attempts to summarize the school improvement plans. It is about sharing ideas and strategies used in schools and classrooms throughout the city. Some are tried and true, some new and untested. It is also about sharing questions and searching for answers. What will schools do to prepare Chicago's children for the next century? Will there be change in how children are taught? In what they are taught? How are schools tackling the big social problems--gangs, drugs, teen pregnancy, dropping out? What are they doing to improve parental involvement? How are they going about finding new resources?

Some of the answers the plans make to these questions appear beginning on page 1. They are described for each goal the reform legislation mandates. The school improvement plans were also expected to discuss five specific topics. Summaries of these discussions follow Goal 20.

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[1]This schedule was a severe burden. In part it was necessitated by the Act's requirement that the systemwide plan, due to the School Finance Authority in mid-summer 1990, "reflect the cumulative effect of the Local School Councils' School Improvement Plans."

Not everything in the school improvement plans is new, or represents a change in curriculum or instructional practice. To the reader unfamiliar with a school, it was not always possible to tell whether items discussed in the plans were new and being tried for the first time, or if they were of long standing. This report is limited to what is in the plans. It is conceivable that some of what is reported here as new or about to be tried is, in fact, a continuation of prior efforts.

The authors of this report suspect that some schools did not include in their plans all those things they are doing or will do which someone else might consider worthy of note. There is also the impression that some of the less well-written plans do not describe very well what is happening in the schools.

This document gives a sense, a flavor of the plans. It is not exhaustive of their contents. It cannot tell what good things all 539 schools will do. If a school is not mentioned here, that does not mean it is not a good school or does not have a good plan. It just means that the authors could not mention all schools.

There is much to be learned from the plans. The one thing that we who read the plans learned, over and over again, is that the public schools of Chicago in 1990-1991 will not be the same as last year. Change has, indeed, begun.

The school improvement plans are public documents. Each school's plan is available for inspection in the school office. Each subdistrict office has copies of the plans for its schools. The Bureau of Planning in the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning has copies of all the plans citywide.[2] You may inspect the original plans at any of these locations.

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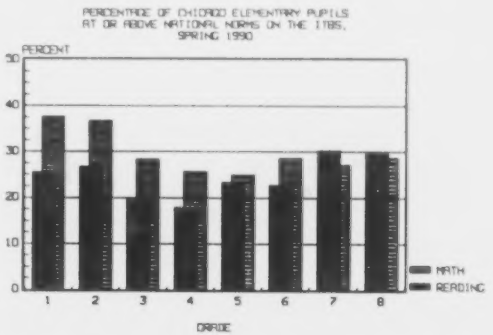
[2]The Bureau of Planning is located in the Central Service Center at 1819 West Pershing Road, on the fourth floor of the West Building. A computerized data base of selected contents from the plans is also available there.

## GOAL 1: *Students achieve proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and higher-order thinking so that their averages equal or surpass national norms.*

Most school improvement plans make the proclamation "all children can learn" or a similar one. The plans promise to provide "appropriate and stimulating educational environments." They clearly expect teachers to teach and students to learn. In that they echo the Guiding Principles adopted by the Interim Board of Education in June 1989.

The reform legislation requires each school to spell out how it will increase students' learning in reading, writing, mathematics, science and higher-order thinking. It specifies standardized achievement tests to assess this goal. The figure below confirms that Chicago's public school students have a considerable distance to go to meet the law's mandate.[3]




The schools offer a wide variety of plans, strategies and techniques to improve test scores. Workshops and inservice training for teachers are the most common strategy, with 80 percent of the elementary schools and 20 percent of the high schools planning them, usually in more than one subject area. Training staff to use test results more effectively or to modify testing programs appears in 62 percent

[3]A few schools protest the legislation's emphasis on standardized testing or what they judge to be unreasonable goals. Locke's plan opposes the concept that 50 per cent of the students should be above national norms. Edgebrook's plan contends that that goal is unrealistic.

of the elementary plans and 43 percent of the high schools. Rethinking or refocusing of teaching methods is to occur in 69 percent of the elementary and 17 percent of the high schools. Among the elementary schools 59 percent will re-examine their textbook and instructional materials selections; 23 percent of the high schools say they will do this.

These initiatives are clearly important. They attest to school staff's concern that they provide the best possible education to students. Still, these initiatives are usually not the central elements of a plan. They provide the backdrop against which changes in the classrooms will take place.

One school's plan lists a 22-point program for raising test scores. However, many of the 22 points are so general (such as "eliminate student learning skill deficits") that it is hard to see what will really happen in the classroom. Another strategy often cited in the plans is test-taking training programs for students. More important may be the efforts of many schools to increase students' time on task or improve teachers' skills.

Most school improvement plans stick to traditional methods of instruction, relying on a good basal reader or textbook supplemented by workbooks and seatwork. More than one-fourth of the schools place major emphasis on remediation, extra study, or tutorial time for students below grade level or identified as at risk of failure.

Evidence of innovation, in the sense of a sharp change of direction or the adoption of a wholly new approach, is rare in the plans. Far more of the schools, it seems, prefer to do more of what they are already doing or to do that better. Incremental change is what is seen, not uprooting and replanting.

Nevertheless, the plans promise more change in the 1990-1991 school year than Chicago's public schools have seen in a long time. A foundation for future progress is being laid. Clark Middle School's image of itself--"we are the torch bearers of excellence, lighting the lamp of knowledge, releasing the wisdom of the universe, propelling us

into the forefront of tomorrow"--is an image many schools share. It is also an image that is now one step nearer reality.

### Reading in the Elementary Schools

Walk into Room 105 at Murray Language Academy on Thursdays at 2 o'clock, and the only sound you will hear is that of pages turning. This is a weekly period of mental refreshment, as well as stimulation and reading practice. All other classrooms at Murray schedule recreational reading periods too. Nor is Murray the only school to use this approach to reading enhancement.

**The only sound is pages turning**

Several schools plan adult literacy classes for parents during school hours. Others are planning evening or weekend classes. In the Pilsen community, schools are planning reading classes in both Spanish and English to promote literacy for all family members. Overall, about one-fifth of the schools propose more intense parent involvement in teaching the students to read.

Some schools chart more radical departures from the norm, planning potent and innovative forms of reading instruction. Burley and others will adopt a whole language approach in which speaking, reading, writing and performing are included in the reading curriculum. LaSalle plans a "blended" program combining "whole-book" learning with basal readers.

A literature-based program is the choice at Norwood Park, while Schmid opted for a Great Books program. Some schools, such as Turner-Drew, have adopted a more gradual approach, using Great Books with selected students or grades. Schmid, like many other schools, also plans a student reading laboratory. Students from Turner-Drew will be making field trips to the public library to meet visiting authors.

Dozens of schools are using incentive programs supported by business, such as Pizza Hut's Book-It awards. Other incentive programs, such as Oglesby's Super Reader Book Club, are developed by the school. At Raster Branch, as at several other schools, non-quota teachers (teacher-facilitators, resource coordinators, and the like) will help classroom teachers with language arts teaching.

Cook's reading readiness program stresses preventive measures. Readiness packages are being prepared for the parents of new kindergarten students. This school community is also developing a Reading Aloud program in which older students will read and write to the younger students. Revere is one school purchasing commercially prepared intensive remediation programs such as Reading Recovery. Overall, about a third of the plans refer to the purchase of one or another commercially available instructional program. Gallistel plans to use the SQUIRT or DEAR reading programs weekly[4], while adding a literature-based program in grades six, seven and eight. The required reading list includes a minimum of two novels per year.

Schools are utilizing their extra-curricular and after-school programs to make reading a socially desirable skill. To promote critical thinking and reading skills, Jackson plans a Book Critics Club among the offerings of its after-school social center. At Nettelhorst, "Becoming a Family of Readers" will be the theme of a parent training workshop. Saucedo plans to encourage parents to send Birthday Books to school: on the child's birthday, the parent contributes a new book to the classroom library as a gift to the class. This makes a lovely classroom tradition: confirming the class' sense of community, encouraging the children's pride and sense of ownership, and adding to the number of books in the room.

Few plans discuss their school's libraries, which appear to be an under-utilized resource in reading development. Kozminski's plan notes that library periods have been used "primarily to provide teacher preparation time." Their plan vows to make the library a research and learning center, with parent volunteers playing a vital role.

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[4]SQUIRT stands for Silent, Quiet, Uninterrupted, Independent Reading Time; DEAR is the acronym for Drop Everything and Read. These are reading enhancement and enrichment programs widely used in the Chicago public schools.

Almost one-quarter of the schools would like to have a longer school day. A few simply ask for more time for instruction. Others, including Irving Park, request after-school or before-school periods for special events, clubs, and activities. Often these are tied to the school's reading curriculum. Gallistel, for instance, wants to extend its day by one hour to allow reading teachers time for extra tutoring and enrichment. Burke wants to provide enrichment at the middle grades. Haugan and Hitch are interested in a social center to encourage drama, arts, aerobics, and tutoring by students, staff, parents, and community members.

## Reading in the High Schools

As in the elementary schools, detailed plans for improving reading achievement are rare. Some may argue that the teaching of reading is not the responsibility of the high school but of the elementary school. Nevertheless, the high schools are aware that some of their students still require instruction in reading. They attempt to fill this need and still provide the required curriculum.

Not surprisingly, the most popular approaches to improving reading achievement include specialized laboratories, tutoring by peers and instructors (cited in 23 percent of the plans), computers (43 percent) and mastery of study and test-taking skills. About 30 percent of the high school plans express the intention to review or revise the curriculum in the future, but usually fail to give details. Basic skills enrichment programs were planned at Foreman, Graham, Lakeview, and others.

Some high schools address this goal with definite ideas and activities in mind, and not always restricted to students lacking in the basic reading skills. Lane will incorporate the Great Books program in English. Drama classes will be one vehicle for enhancing reading at Juarez and Tilden. Washington will develop a new senior-level drama course entitled "Tragedy," which will trace that dramatic form from the Greek theater to the present. Through this, it is hoped, students will grow in understanding of human behavior in critical situations. Washington is

**Joys of reading "aloud, along, a lot, abed"**

also stressing its inter-generational reading program, in which persons of all ages and generations share the joys of reading "aloud, along, a lot, abed, a day, a book, and just reading!"

WRITING

Some school improvement plans vow to have their students perform better on a standardized writing test. Others wonder whether there are or will be appropriate writing tests. Numerous plans (29 percent) ignore writing as a goal.

In the more developed plans for writing, a variety of traditional and new strategies to motivate children to write are proposed. Keeping daily journals and producing school newspapers are popular forms. McDowell's students will be writing to their grandparents, a task that even the youngest students can enjoy. Dozens of schools are setting up pen pal clubs. Combining writing with public relations, students at Franklin will write to local businesses and community organizations to invite them to school events. LaSalle will publish *IMAGES*, a student literary magazine, and will also see that students learn word processing skills. Parents at Saucedo plan to launch the Saucedo Publishing Company. One common strategy is that of awards and incentives, which are proposed by over a quarter of the schools.

Murray will benefit from a cooperative creative writing program in which University of Chicago students, paid by the University, work with children in small groups. Computer-enhanced writing programs are being planned at several schools, including Manley High. Writing competitions, particularly the Illinois Young Authors competition, are often cited as a means to stimulate creative writing among students. These activities usually occur in the spring semester, leading up to the contest deadline.

At Lindblom a great deal of effort is being spent incorporating writing instruction throughout the curriculum. A department at a time--

English, history, and mathematics first--receives training in integrating writing into its subject area. Each department has a teacher-expert who is responsible for the program. All staff members are expected to modify their curricula and their expectations for what and how much students should write.

Fenger and Kelvyn Park will also integrate writing skills throughout the curriculum. Curie's students will use their writing skills in mathematics. Richards and Carver plan to develop writing programs. Local universities will help with special reading and writing projects at Englewood, Lane, and Lincoln Park.

Grammar--the study of the structure and rules of language--is rarely highlighted in the plans for improving students' writing. Gage Park's writing skills program will emphasize mastery of grammar. At Lafayette, choral speaking, songs, poems, finger plays and nursery rhymes are instruments to model proper syntax. While specific curricular change is rarely suggested for spelling, most schools' plans do mention spelling bees or contests

## Mathematics in the Elementary Schools

Most schools propose to increase the time and materials they devote to mathematics: more minutes for mathematics instruction, more mathematics periods in the schedule, more homework, or more workbooks for additional exercise or drill. Many schools plan to expand the use of calculators and math manipulatives. Carter is adopting the Korean *Chisenbop* finger counting technique. At the other end of the technological spectrum, about 10 percent of the schools mention computers in their plans to improve mathematics instruction.

While reading groups have a longstanding history in the class-room, grouping for mathematics has been less apparent. Change in this pattern is reflected in about 10 percent of the plans. LaSalle, for instance, will use ability grouping for mathematics in grades four through eight but not in kindergarten through grade three. It will also introduce algebra earlier in the curriculum. Prescott plans to begin algebra at sixth grade.

Haugan and several other schools discuss establishing mathematics clubs for students. Jackson plans monthly schoolwide estimation contests along with Metric Olympics for the primary grades. The school will use the Math Their Way program for children in kindergarten and grades one and two.

At McDowell and other schools, skills such as balancing a checkbook and making a budget will become parts of arithmetic lessons. Henry's students will construct charts and graphs plotting the school's attendance patterns. Kosciuszko will stress cultural awareness in mathematics instruction. Carpenter is redesigning its mathematics curriculum to take advantage of community resources and businesses in order to promote understanding of the integration of mathematics and science in life.

Practical projects such as student-run stores and gift shops help make mathematics meaningful and real at Sayre and several other schools. The Get Real Gift Shop, a feature of the ESEA Chapter 1 mathematics program at Beethoven, is open Tuesdays and Fridays. Students are responsible for all aspects of the store, including stocking, sales, accounting, and displays. Students, teachers, parents, and community members are among the customers. The store generated a profit in the 1989-90 school year.[5]

## Mathematics in the High Schools

The high schools' initiatives in mathematics frequently point to a desire to increase flexibility. Both Gage Park and Lane will allow students who fail first semester Algebra I to repeat the course in the second semester. Since Algebra I is a prerequisite for all other pre-college math, discouragement here may mean giving up on post-secondary education. Washington plans to expand higher mathematics offerings for both technical and non-technical students.

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[5]A 30-minute video tape demonstrating this project, in the store and in class, is available from Dr. Morven Ngaiyaye, Department of Grants and Technical Assistance, the Chicago Public Schools, telephone (312) 535-8162.

Attracting more students to mathematics is evident in many plans. New mathematics courses with strong practical applications are projected at several schools. Westinghouse will offer more technical and business mathematics. Juarez's "informal geometry" approach will add to the mathematical training of those who avoid this subject. Sullivan's music department will stress the mathematical basis of music and its notation.

Many schools, including Clemente, Foreman, Kelly, King, Lakeview, Lindblom, Near North, and Richards, address upgrading the basic mathematics skills of students. Foreman will make more use of computers. Curie and Near North are developing tutorial programs. King and Kelly are working on mathematics laboratories to help with remediation. The laboratories at Kennedy will make use of behavior modification theory to improve students' orientation to the subject. Almost every school plans a mathematics fair, game, or contest.

## Science in the Elementary Schools

Several schools see a close link between science and critical thinking skills. As Wirth's School Improvement Plan put it, "the purposes of the study of science are to develop students who are scientifically literate, recognize that science is not value-free, are capable of making ethical judgments regarding science and social issues, and understand that technological growth is an outcome of scientific enterprise." At its best, science education fosters the natural curiosity and sense of wonder that children have. The big topics of elementary science--living things, matter and energy, the universe--fascinate children endlessly.

Nevertheless, the schools' plans do not, in the main, reflect a very high emphasis on the sciences. A quarter of the plans did not address this goal at all. While concern about the status of science education is evident in some plans, very little innovation is found. For some elementary schools, science is a flurry of activity surrounding the annual science fair. An occasional plans mentions a field trip to a scientific institution. What goes on in the classroom from day to day is rarely elaborated.

In the school improvement plans which do address the subject, there is a distinct emphasis on two issues: purchasing materials (well over a quarter of the schools) and training teachers (about half the schools). Purchasing science resource materials, hands-on experiment kits for the classroom,[6] up-to-date textbooks, field trips play an important part in most plans. Budgeting for science books and materials exceeds spending for most other subject areas, at least as is evident from the plans.

There is wide disparity in the physical setting for science from one school to the next. Newer schools may have self-contained laboratories, as well as space for more elaborate equipment; at the older Murray and Banneker schools, one goal is simply to get a science laboratory equipped with running water.

The plans view teacher training as crucial to improving elementary science. A case in point occurs at White where students score an average of eight months below grade level on the science achievement tests administered at fifth and seventh grades. Student interest in science is high as shown by the participation in the annual science fair. Part of the solution, according to White's plan, is to increase science workshops and inservices for staff. Teachers must be more knowledgeable not only about scientific principles, but also about how to present material in a more vivid fashion. With most teachers at White long out of college, knowledge about science content and teaching methods needs continual updating.

Bringing science specialists into the schools is one way Chicago's rich complement of museums, universities, and businesses can help. White will use Lincoln Park's Zoo To You program and Commonwealth Edison's City of Lights presentation in its intermediate grades. De Diego is one of several schools whose upper cycle students will receive special science and mathematics training in cooperation with the University of Illinois at Chicago. The Illinois Institute of Technology will supplement science programs at Earle and McDade. Upper grade

[6]Science-on-a-Shoestring is one very popular such program. Schools throughout the city plan to adopt it. A few schools, such as LaSalle, will develop their own such kits which in LaSalle's case will also be available in the school library for students to check out.

students from Murray will benefit from the scientific expertise of staff of Chicago Osteopathic Hospital. At Dirksen, parents will be trained to assist in the Amoco Science Program.

**the environment, ecology, recycling**

Other schools go it alone. Powell will emphasize health and nutrition. Television specials on science and health will become part of Hartigan's science curriculum. Grissom, named for the astronaut Virgil "Gus" Grissom, plans a unit on space exploration in the 90s. There is also a Young Astronauts Club. Similar plans exist at White, whose namesake was the astronaut Edward H. White.

McDowell will implement a Save Our Earth unit in the spring of 1991. Field will do the same, using state Chapter 1 funds to add science texts and materials. Jackson, which participates in a Chicago Botanic Gardens project and has a new greenhouse, will add units on environmental protection and recycling. Jackson will include drug education in its science curriculum rather than confine this topic to a health class. Gresham is developing a curriculum stressing environmental science concepts.

A science volunteer group organized by the Friends of Oscar Mayer brings parents and professionals to the school to provide firsthand demonstrations and science experiences for the students. Mayer also plans to use part of its 1992 state Chapter 1 allocation to employ a science teacher. At Peirce, state Chapter 1 monies will support expanded science experiences for seventh and eighth grade students. The 1989-90 school year science fair there was so successful that a second one was held in June. Peabody too will conduct two fairs in 1990-91. Carter will hold its fair in the evening so more parents can attend.

"The earlier, the better" seems to be the motto at both Beasley and Lyon, where science laboratories are scheduled for preschool and kindergarten. Beasley will add a grade to the program each year.

Bateman's upper grade students will do experiments and demonstrations for younger children in a Science Wiz program.

## Science in the High Schools

A few high schools, including Washington and Westinghouse, are actively restructuring their science offerings to include more students not enrolled in college preparatory courses. Juarez plans the construction of a Hall of Science which will have informative murals on scientific topics. Corliss will increase time spent in science laboratories, while Sullivan desires to reduce class size in science courses. King is working on strategies to encourage more students to enroll in physics and chemistry.

Bowen's School Improvement Plan includes a nuts-and-bolts, comprehensive laboratory safety program, including reorganization of chemical supplies, equipping every lab with a type A-B-C fire extinguisher, and providing each student with safety goggles. Inservices on lab safety will be conducted for students and staff. Every student will be required to score 100 percent on a safety exam in each class before being permitted to do laboratory work.

## Higher-Order Thinking

Students need to learn to think perceptively and critically to meet the world's challenges. The recognition of this need goes back at least to Socrates, who used a questioning technique to teach reasoning and create understanding. Today students still question. Adults often fail to respond. Rather than help students' improve their reasoning by building on their questions, schools often discourage criticism and independent thought.

Half the school improvement plans address this goal. Four of the more clearly defined approaches are whole-language, Great Books, Paideia, and IBM's Writing to Read programs. Each of these methods involves problem-solving with large doses of discussion, committee work,

independent study, and inquiry. Many schools hope to purchase one of these programs or to integrate portions of them into their curriculum.

Several schools plan cooperative efforts with universities. Wirth, in conjunction with the University of Chicago, will use mathematics games as the vehicle. Bass and several other schools participate in a program for sixth-graders at the University of Illinois at Chicago which prepares them for Saturday College.

McDowell's action plan for higher-order thinking includes debate and chess clubs. McDade will develop thinking skills by teaching LOGO (a computer language) to kindergarten through sixth grade. Garvy's students collect data and conduct experiments inside and outside the school. The results are brought to the classroom for further research and analysis. A group report culminates each project. Students at Peterson can expect to be read to more this year; however, the stories will present a trail of evidence leading to a conclusion or solution. Each classroom at Spry will face a weekly problem-solving activity, each month the school will confront one. The principal of Parkside plans to pose a "brain teaser" to the school each day.

Several schools will use history and culture to give students practice in using higher-order skills. Christopher will hold a History Day for which students will research historical figures, dramatize their lives, and prepare oral or written reports on what they have learned. Aldridge will use a more Afro-centric curriculum to highlight the biographies of African-Americans whose creative thinking influenced their contemporaries.

Peck is one of several schools investigating basal readers. It plans to choose a new one which stresses critical thinking and problem-solving. Carpenter is rethinking its reading curriculum and plans to implement an interactive model of reading that will include literature based instruction, whole language approaches, process writing techniques, and cooperative learning. It will integrate such instructional strategies as use of journals, shared reading, book talks, choral speaking, story reading, story telling, and listening activities. This combination, staff believe, will increase students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Clissold sees possibilities for improving its students' thinking skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as arts instruction.

Teachers need special preparation to implement these new ideas about learning. Some school improvement plans describe staff development efforts. Grissom plans staff development in "taxonomies of thinking, creativity, humor, left-right brain, automaticity and locus of control." Hartigan has similar goals. Saucedo plans a series of small-group sessions for its teachers; they will develop questions and classroom techniques which focus on critical thinking. Barnard is fortunate to have a teacher who received a year-long training course in critical thinking and who will in turn conduct a series of seminars for school staff.

Parents too can be involved. West Pullman, for instance, is conducting workshops for teachers and parents focusing on the processes of data collection and investigation. Saucedo's training sessions will include parents.

Robeson will integrate higher-order thinking skills into science, mathematics and English. Each department will develop test items for teachers to use when constructing tests. Items tapping higher-order skills will have a prominent role.

### Social Studies

Many schools added a social studies goal to the ones required by the legislation. Here too, fairs and contests play an important role. Carter will hold a social studies fair, while Ogden's upper grade students will participate in the Illinois history fair. Steinmetz is planning a living history component in its social studies curriculum.

## GOAL 2: *Students attend school regularly.*

Failure to attend class results in school failure. School staff and councils understand very well. More than 91 percent of the schools address this goal in their plans.[7] Since motivation to attend school derives from many sources, schools looked at a number of methods to improve attendance. One, the use of awards and incentives, appears in 85 percent of the elementary and 70 percent of the high school plans.

While most school improvement plans address improving attendance with the help of truant officers, TAP-ONE programs,[8] and other procedures, few schools directly address the issue of making the school itself a more inviting and appealing place in order to increase attendance. In some cases, the school provides a safe haven from neighborhood poverty and violence. Nourishing meals and a warm, well-lighted building may offer a welcome contrast to outside conditions. In its plan, Niños Heroes describes its aim of becoming "a safe haven" for its students.

The reform legislation mandates that the overall attendance rate increase by one percent over the prior year in each of the five years of the plan. This suggests that by the 1993-94 school year the attendance rate systemwide should exceed 94 percent. A few schools which already meet or surpass this rate, such as Lincoln, do not address attendance in detail in their plans.

Truth has launched a colorful tradition of placing Perfect Attendance cards and balloons outside the classroom door each day a class has perfect attendance. Cuffe, Funston, and White present perfect attendance banners to classrooms which achieve this goal, hold annual award programs, and mount bulletin boards with pictures and names of students having perfect attendance. Gale students with perfect attendance will lead their school in opening ceremonies at programs and

[7]This placed it second among the goals in terms of the number of schools addressing it. Only the reading goal was addressed by more schools.

[8]This is an acronym for Truants Alternative Program, On Needs Early.

assemblies. Gale plans to award extra gym periods to classrooms with perfect attendance, while the teachers of classrooms whose monthly attendance exceeds 96 percent will receive $25 gift certificates.

Movies and other prizes will be offered students with excellent attendance at Howe, Aldridge and Lovett. Aldridge proposes to award extra time on computer to students in the classrooms with the best attendance rates. Jahn will be rewarding good attendance with White Sox tickets and monthly movies. In addition, states their school improvement plan, "The principal marks report cards in red of frequently absent pupils."

De Diego plans to continue its carnival for those with perfect attendance. Big prizes are the lure in Carter's annual attendance lottery, with opportunities to win 10-speed bikes, trips to Great America, and a 13-inch television set.

The number of schools which intend to have their administrations report absences to parents on a daily basis is growing. Haugan plans an auto-dialing system or phone robot, such as Tel-Sol, to notify parents. Parkside, Revere, and Thorp are among schools which intend to make more effective use of their truant officers and truant alternative programs, such as TAP-ONE. Bradwell will buy a system to telephone parents after or before school hours to make them aware of problems.

Hefferan will spend some $5000 to equip each classroom with a telephone to allow teachers to talk immediately and directly with families of students who fail to show up at school or have other problems. Robeson plans to employ off-duty policemen to make home attendance visits. Kershaw will refer its chronic truants to the school-community representative for follow-up and home visitations. Gresham will develop a Watch List flagging those pupils who have had an absence or tardiness rate of five percent or more.

A few schools face specific absenteeism problems due to conflicting values. For example, at Niños Heroes, the administration will caution parents concerning the common extended Christmas holiday vacations. Many of the school's families take trips out of the country at that time,

disrupting their children's studies by staying away longer than the school vacation period.

A few school improvement plans recognize that they can reduce absenteeism by improving health and nutrition. Some mention lack of inoculations, as well as last winter's sub-zero temperatures, as having increased their absenteeism. At Thorp the PTA will sponsor a health fair in the fall. Lyon is one of many schools which will be serving breakfasts to improve health and promote attendance.

## *Attendance, health, and hot water*

Herbert reports that past incentive programs have not significantly raised the school's 89 percent attendance rate. The rapid spread of disease throughout the school almost every year suggests that poor student health is a real factor. Herbert will replace the heating coil on the school's dishwasher since it has allowed the temperature of the wash and rinse water to fall below public health standards.

Students' mental health, also a vital concern, is rarely addressed in school plans. One exception LaSalle's plan for a Capable Kids program to teach children stress management.

What if an attendance problem arises because of tension between students or between student and teacher? At some schools, the child is expected to adjust no matter what. McCorkle's reform initiative includes the flexibility to switch a student to another class in certain cases. Inter-American is developing a conflict resolution program to teach self-discipline skills and respect for others. Cuffe will be working on instilling attendance values early in its children's academic careers by placing special emphasis on attendance in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

A few schools in areas plagued with violent crime and gang activity express concern that lack of physical safety may be partly responsible for keeping students away from school. Some, like Burke, will add security personnel and increase security measures. Cameron will be on

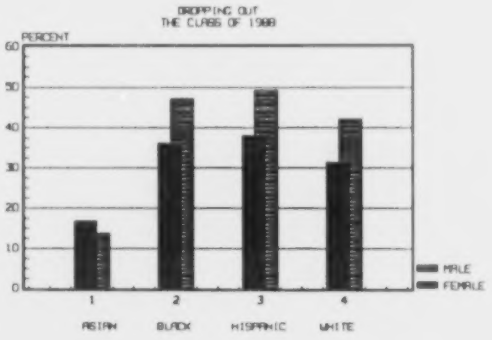
the alert against vandalism, theft, extortion, false fire alarms, fighting, and gang recruitment in the upper grades.

Several schools mention attendance problems related to busing and student transportation. They resent being held responsible for absences or tardiness caused by buses which do not show or arrive late. They complain of the lost class time and the disruption to school routines. Elementary magnet schools, scholastic academies, and gifted schools which draw students from large areas are especially vulnerable.

Also affected are schools which send students elsewhere. Hay's plan states that it sends several hundred students to other schools each day. When buses fail to arrive, these students must be absorbed into the already crowded building and schedule. Hay would like to rent additional classroom space and totally eliminate the need for students to be bused out.

## GOAL 3: *Students graduate from high school at such rates that the district average equals or surpasses the national norm.*

Barely 50 percent of Chicago's high school freshmen make it through four full years to graduate. Delayed entry to high school and low primary test scores are related to the failure to graduate. Race and sex, on the other hand, seem to affect it less.[9] Raising the graduation rate will be a difficult task. And Goal 3 requires that the graduation rate increase by at least five percentage points each year for five years.




Most of the high school improvement plans are aware of the need to graduate more students. Likewise, most plans recognize similar characteristics and symptoms among students likely to drop out. Seventy percent of the plans propose strategies to increase their schools' graduation rates.[10] Some, like the Amundsen and Lincoln Park plans, include detailed reports on their at-risk students. Many schools focused on drop-out prevention, targeting ninth and tenth grade students.

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[9]These conclusions appear in *Dropouts: A Descriptive Review of the Class of 1986 and Trend Analysis of 1982-1986 Classes* (Chicago: The Chicago Public Schools, December 1988). The data on which the figure is based are for freshmen entering high school in the fall of 1984.

[10]A handful of elementary schools (under two per cent of all schools ) discussed this goal. Poe's faculty, for instance, will meet with high school departmental faculties to facilitate students' transition. At Stowe, upper grade students receive instruction in pregnancy prevention, AIDS, and drug and alcohol avoidance.

Although this goal is for high schools, several, including DuSable and Gage Park, focus on their feeder elementary schools. Current research on drop-outs supports the notion that intervention at the elementary school level, even as early as third grade, can be helpful. Conversely, a number of elementary school improvement plans reflect early intervention through descriptions of high school transition and use of high school student speakers programs. Columbus, DuBois, LaSalle, Moos, Otis, Poe, Sauganash, and White are working on this.

DuSable has instituted a Big Brother/Big Sister program for its feeder elementary and middle schools, complete with videotaping and survey evaluation of the participants, to combat the drop-out problem. Bogan, Englewood, Foreman, and the Industrial Skills Center will use early drop-out identification and intervention programs. Both Robeson and Steinmetz plan to maintain off-campus drop-out prevention centers.

Several schools intend to increase graduation rates by improving the curriculum and through counseling. Juarez proposes expanding its technical department by adding a graphics communications shop. Lindblom will enhance its counseling services, lowering the student:counselor ratio to 200:1 and adding group guidance programs, to help students stay in school.

Clemente's comprehensive plan begins in the freshman year and includes identification of potential problems, development of a support system, monitoring of progress, development of a committee to study causes of drop-out and failures, math and reading enrichment courses, vocational courses, and building a stronger relationship between school and home. New alumni associations are being developed at Austin, Fenger, and Kenwood.

## GOAL 4: *Fewer students fail.*

One-third of the elementary schools and more than 40 percent of the high schools did not say how they planned to reduce the number of students failing or being retained. Yet, at least 480 (or 89 percent) of the regular elementary schools in the 1988-89 school year retained some students.[11] Since the legislation requires that the proportion of students retained in the 1993-94 school year be at least 10 percent smaller than in the 1987-88 year, more planning for this goal might have been expected.

But retention is controversial in schools. Some educators believe that retaining students does more harm than good and are addressing ways to prevent retention. Effective schools research indicates that failure in the primary grades places a child at high risk of not graduating from high school. However, some of Chicago's school communities disagree, believing that to abandon retention is not in the best interests of their students.

The Edgebrook Local School Council voted to take exception to the mandate to reduce retention and will continue to retain students, if necessary, following its current policy. The plan contends that retention "is an effective tool for improving student achievement while maintaining high academic standards. While we will seek compliance with this goal, we will not do so at the expense of our standards of excellence or to the detriment of students who need extra time and teaching." The school is especially concerned for students who are newly transferred in from overcrowded schools where expectations were lower.

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[11]From John Q. Easton and Sandra Storey, *June 1989 Grade Retention in Chicago Public Elementary Schools* (Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance). This report analyzes data provided to the Panel by the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning. About 20 schools--mostly gifted, classical, or magnet schools--reported no students retained in 1988-89. Also on the list were Carver Primary, Curtis, Dulles, Funston, Goethe, L. Hughes, Key, Morse, Pickard, Reilly, L. Ward and Woodson North.

Hay's LSC "opposes automatic promotion of children" and voted to defer action until it has time to review the current retention policy. Herbert claims that its entire school improvement plan addresses the retention issue by improving academic programs.

In Chopin's well-articulated plan, demotion occurs during the first quarter only; documentation from past and previous teachers must accompany the recommendation for retention; parents must be notified in writing; a remediation plan is developed and outlined before the first semester; alternatives to retention are provided; the principal must be involved in the decision.

Most schools' interventions consist primarily of remediation, counseling and guidance, the latter often directed at parents. Beasley is setting up a before-school tutorial program for reading. Robeson will operate a homework center before and after school and on Saturdays. Lane offers students tutoring until 10 p.m. on weeknights. Washington High will send home five-week progress reports on each student, whether passing or failing.

Stockton and other elementary schools are setting up homework clubs and after-school remediation programs. Grissom plans a special honor roll entitled the We Try Harder Club in which effort as well as achievement will be rewarded. LaSalle will require a remediation plan for any child at risk of retention.

Courtenay intends to use high school students from Lakeview to tutor children in need of extra help. At Sauganash, the BUG program will provide concentrated help for at-risk students[12], while Cook will institute transitional rooms to assist students who have not made satisfactory progress.

At Ross teachers waived some requirements of their union contract to provide before school remediation for their students, deferring the usual preparation periods until after daily dismissal. This would have allowed an additional half hour of instructional time each day which could have been used for individual student or small group assistance.

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[12]BUG stands for Bringing Up Grades.

However, Ross decided to amend its School Improvement Plan and refocus its efforts on the Sage project. Sage Analytics' computer program will analyze data obtained from interviews and brainstorming sessions with school personnel and parents to provide direction on consensus building and subsequent action steps.

GOAL 5: ***Students are, to the maximum extent possible, provided with a common learning experience that is of high academic quality and that reflects high expectations for all students' capacities to learn.***

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While the reform legislation mandates that schools "provide students with a common learning experience," the law does not define this experience. Judging from the school improvement plans, principals and LSC members too find the concept ambiguous. This may help explain why two-thirds of the schools did not address this goal.

Assemblies are the most frequently named strategy for common learning experience, with field trips running a close second. At one school, having a common textbook for every student in a given grade level, including special education students, was considered the hallmark of common learning experience. Others, too, will make efforts to assure continuity of instruction from room to room and grade to grade. One school's plan allocated more than $65,000 in state Chapter 1 money for "creation and implementation" of a common learning experience, but did not detail how the dollars would be spent.

The content of the other clause of this goal, referring to "high academic quality" and "high expectations," appears more frequently in the plans. Typically, that content is found in vision statements or as background to discussions of the achievement goals rather than in explicit discussions. Schools want high academic quality. Schools want to hold high expectations. They believe in them. However, few offer precise descriptions of how they will bring about these desires.

The Hefferan plan cites some aspects of effective schools research it wishes to emulate. These include reducing the tracking of students by ability, maintaining high expectations of students by staff, believing that each student has some unique characteristic which can be developed, uncovered or unleashed. If staff conviction is firm, parents and students come to accept them and reach for new challenges and goals. For the next three years, Hefferan will be restructuring its classroom

organization to allow for heterogeneous grouping and it will instruct in all grades at grade level (its gifted program excepted).

High expectations characterize Kelvyn Park's plan. The school will design an interdisciplinary staff development program to instill in staff a high expectation for students' learning. Increasing students' self-esteem is a goal at Spry and Laura Ward. The assumption is that students will maintain or improve their academic performance if they feel better about themselves. Mayer proposes a direct approach towards higher self-esteem for students with learning disabilities by letting them serve as tutors in its tutoring program.

## GOAL 6: *Education services are, to the extent possible, provided for all eligible children aged four years, using available categorical funds.*

Recent long term studies of preschool programs have found that students who had participated in well-designed and executed preschool readiness programs experience more academic success in elementary and high school, lower drop-out rates, less retention in grade, and fewer special education placements.[13] These students also experienced better social adjustment and reduced delinquency and welfare dependency. The programs also helped parents become more involved in their children's education.

Prekindergarten programs already operate at over half of Chicago's public schools. The federally funded Head Start and Child-Parent Center programs, survivors of the 1960s war on poverty, support 146 prekindergartens. The State of Illinois' educational reform legislation of 1985 has added 179 sites and this number continues to increase. In addition, local funds support prekindergartens at Colman, Disney, Inter-American, and Randolph.

Fewer than one-quarter of the school improvement plans for elementary schools address this goal. Bridge points out that a preschool is not needed there. Most of the elementary schools would like to have a prekindergarten program but encountered major barriers such as lack of space, funding, appropriate personnel, or parental support. Both Hay and Niños Heroes express a need for a prekindergarten but have no space. The existing preschool at Swift has no more space in which to expand, although there are many families who would benefit from its services.

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[13]See, for instance, the monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, including J. R. Berrueta-Clement, L. J. Schweinhart, W. S. Barnett, A. S. Epstein, and D. P. Weikart, *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths through Age 19* (Ypsilanti, MI.: High/Scope Press, 1984).

Some schools say they will develop prekindergarten programs despite difficulties. These include Beard, which plans to open a Head Start or a full-day kindergarten for non-special education children. The purpose is to increase the school's ability to mainstream its profoundly handicapped children. Other schools wishing to add preschool programs for four-year-olds include Grissom, Mayer and Sayre.

Bontemps will extend its Head Start program by providing screening for four-year-olds who do not attend the preschool program but who may be candidates for special education services. Otis wishes to extend its Head Start program into the summer months.

**GOAL 7:** ***Class size is reduced as near the state average as possible, with priority on grades kindergarten through three, considering other school needs as determined by the local school council.***

Seventy percent of the plans do not discuss this goal. Most schools accept that class size is fixed by the contract between the Chicago Teachers' Union and the Board of Education. Many schools, nevertheless, have smaller classes. Schools receiving supplementary funding under ESEA Chapter 1, bilingual programs, the reduced class size options of the state funded Reading Improvement program, or desegregation monies, for instance, all will have classrooms enrolling fewer students than the official figure.

The schools that do address this goal usually discuss it in the context of overcrowded buildings or lack of space. More than one school reports that classes are held on the auditorium stage, in the book closet, in hallways and corners. Serious overcrowding can produce low achievement, teacher frustration and burn-out, lack of time for individualization, and, at some locations, the desire to eliminate special or mandated programs which use up classroom space. Revere's School Improvement Plan calls for removing, by September 1992, all special education divisions that serve students from other schools. This pressure on space is echoed in Holden's plan: "improved working conditions would be achieved by transferring some divisions of special education to other facilities."

Even schools that are not severely overcrowded have space problems. Jamieson describes itself as "full but not yet overcrowded." Students transferring in represent 22 percent of the student body. The Jamieson community is concerned because a study of transfer students shows that, as a group, they average more than one stanine below the other Jamieson students. Rising enrollment and new students with varied preparation, study and work habits, have prompted the school to pay careful attention to effectiveness of instruction and use of space.

Garvy and Schmid address split classes, classrooms containing more than one grade and instructional level but having only one teacher. Although Garvy is not overcrowded, students' academic achievement in split-class conditions concerns the LSC. The problem comes about because the school has more students at a grade level than can be taught by one teacher but not enough to justify a second teacher under the teacher contract. There is no way to avoid this, says the plan, unless class size is drastically reduced and the additional salaries funded by the Board of Education.

Murphy's plan encourages "political action" to incite administrative or legislative action to increase the number of available teachers so that class size can be reduced and course offerings increased.

More schools cite the need for space to expand growing programs or to begin new ones. Burley and Powell cannot expand their educational offerings because their buildings are filled to capacity. Hay has the will to expand and half a million dollars in federal ESEA Chapter 1 and state Chapter 1 money to hire more teachers, but there is no room in which to conduct additional classes.

One school with a particularly radical answer to overcrowding is Gale on the far North Side. Originally planned to hold 750 students, Gale faces a fall of 1990 enrollment of nearly 1,150 students. The solution proposed in the school improvement plan is to hold school year-round. Using four staggered streams, the number of children in the building on any given day is reduced by one-third. Muñoz Marin (formerly the Lowell Branch) is adopting the same strategy.

Space problems are not always related to overcrowding. Salazar, a bilingual primary center with fewer than 300 students, has no auditorium, lunchroom or gymnasium. McDowell, with some 200 kindergarten through fifth grade children, considers its space to be its biggest problem. The building lacks a library, a science or computer room, and an all-purpose room (for use as a gymnasium, assembly hall or lunchroom); there isn't even a teacher's lounge. Its plan goes on record opposing any reduction in class size: more room is the immediate need.

Many schools request mobile or modular units for counseling, speech, or tutoring. This would free up classrooms in the regular building or make it possible to add computer or science laboratories or space for fine arts. A few plans request additions or new permanent buildings. Haugan plans a kitchen and lunchroom. Lenart is exploring expanding its building. McDowell's plan states "We have proposed a creative, innovative method of financing the addition to our existing building."

Several schools, including Edgebrook, took exception to this goal, suggesting that the Board of Education has the responsibility to lower class size, not the local school. Others fail to see the relevance of this goal. The Sauganash plan expresses its intention to "maintain" rather than reduce class size.

GOAL 8: ***Students are provided adequate athletic programs that encourage pride and positive identification with the attendance center and that reduce the number of dropouts and teenage delinquents.***[14]

Physical education is a major concern in many plans. Many of the elementary schools boast of their athletic teams, cheerleaders, and pom-pom girls. At Stagg, a girls' volleyball team will be forming, while Mitchell plans a wide range of after-school athletic activities. Ericson will build pride and positive self-image by organizing a basketball team and maintaining its drill team. King Elementary will initiate intramural competition within grade levels, culminating with an annual awards banquet for grade champions. Langston Hughes will conduct after-school pep rallies for sports events during the entire school year. Cullen seeks funds for an after-school athletic program. The Gunsaulus physical education teacher will start at 8:00 a.m. to teach sports skills and conduct intramural competition.

Many schools discuss health education under this goal. Stevenson has developed a series of drug, health, and nutrition programs. Nettelhorst's plan calls for the development of a health curriculum including AIDS and drug education. Dever, Gallistel, Orozco, and Stowe, among others, are implementing the computer-enhanced Body Awareness Resource Network (BARN), a program for drug and alcohol avoidance developed by CPS staff. Smyth is involved with the In-Touch drug prevention program.

Several elementary school plans cite the lack of a gymnasium or all-purpose room as a major obstacle to a physical education program. At some schools, physical education classes are held only in warm weather when the outdoor parking area can be used. Still other schools note

[14]One in five high schools and half the elementary schools address this goal. Discussions typically focus on the goal's first clause, providing athletic programs. Some schools treat the issues of pride and positive identification but very few link athletics with reducing dropping out and delinquency.

that, with only a half-time gym teacher, students receive physical education instruction for 30 minutes or less each week.

The Franklin plan recognizes the importance of free and structured play in the mental and physical development of children. The Clissold PTA will supplement the physical education program by making it possible for students to participate in after-school and off-campus volleyball, roller skating, and bowling.

Washington High plans to identify and help athletes who are at risk academically in addition to hiring an athletic director. Clemente is re-orienting its physical education program with the long term goal of helping students learn life-long health and fitness skills. Clemente also plans to use the two-year physical education exemption rule when necessary.

Juarez will challenge students with a new class entitled Adventure Physical Education featuring aquatics, first aid training, camping, and climbing. More intramural sports--softball, tennis, track and basketball--will enhance programs at Gage Park and Robeson. Bowen plans health workshops for students, more recreational sports, and dance classes including tap and square dance.

## GOAL 9: *Students are adequately prepared for and aided in making a successful transition to employment.*

About one-third of the elementary and three-quarters of the high schools have plans to prepare students for the workplace. Gallistel, for example, plans to make each of its students aware of 34 career areas by the time they reach eighth grade. Other elementary schools planning extensive career awareness programs include DuBois, Lowell, Sherman, and Wirth.

Lovett and Oglesby will invite parents to Show and Tell days so they may discuss their jobs with students. Courtenay plans a pre-vocational work training program which will provide its students with an opportunity to learn specific work-related skills. Other activities planned by schools include: hosting career days, mock job interviews, field trips to businesses; teaching students to organize and develop their own classroom companies; encouraging the business community to recruit area students for paying and non-paying jobs; and inviting graduates to return and discuss their professional or college experiences.

High schools are working to achieve this goal in several ways. Many are conducting reviews of their counseling programs. Some are creating work-study, career-counseling, and career-awareness programs. Others are introducing new vocational or technical courses and working them into their curricula. Help is also being solicited from outside sources. For example, many high schools are asking parents to assist in meeting this goal, either as individuals or as part of a parent group. At least ten high schools have plans to increase their business and community involvement through advisory councils, program adoptions, and various career activities.

High schools focusing their planning on pre-vocational and pre-technical skills include Amundsen, DuSable, Kelvyn Park, and Near North. These schools plan to increase student enrollment in their vocational and technical departments. Bogan and Clemente will do

more career counseling, while Gage Park will implement a summer jobs program and cooperative work training for its students.

The schools, especially at the secondary level, are working hard to meet this goal, to find a program or combination of programs which offers the best balance between education and training, academics and vocation, and also considers the individual needs, interests, and talents of each student.

## GOAL 10: *Students are adequately prepared for and aided in making a successful transition to further education and life experiences.*

It is clear that the authors of the plans know that schools must prepare their students for life after school. This is obvious in the statements of vision or purpose most plans contain. A common thread is assuring that the student learns what school traditionally teaches: the three Rs, conduct, etc. Achieving Goal 10 then follows from success in meeting the other goals.

Consequently, some 60 percent of the high schools do not address this goal directly. Schools which do write about it--Kenwood, Lincoln Park, and Lindblom, among others--usually focus on the transition to further education. They also tend to be schools with strong college preparatory programs.

The high schools' planned activities with respect to further education are sparse and show little innovation or creative effort. The goal is sometimes mentioned in the plan but not explained. Often, the mention is casual or indirect, stated in the context of achieving some other goal. An exception is the Robeson plan which calls for the formation of a Super Parents scholarship program to assist with college costs. Other schools are preparing students for the transition to college by offering members of the senior class exit interviews with members of the faculty.

Sixty-three percent of the elementary plans omit mention of this goal altogether. Few elementary plans are explicitly college-oriented. The vision statement of Niños Heroes offers a conspicuous exception. It states that college is a real goal for its students. A few schools, including Mayer, are establishing ongoing relationships with universities or colleges. Poe is planning articulation activities, field trips to post-secondary institutions, and presentations by former graduates. Several elementary schools plan pay close attention to their graduates' progress in high school. Peterson and several others are working on early involvement in high school for its more able students.

## GOAL 11: *Students are better prepared to compete in the international market place by having foreign language proficiency and stronger international studies.*

A satellite dish plus five computers will enable Robeson's foreign language students to interact globally with students in French- and Spanish-speaking countries. This "living textbook" is just one among many lively plans to rejuvenate foreign language studies in Chicago schools.

Some educational research suggests that foreign language instruction is more effective when it stresses content rather than grammar. Thus, the study of cultures and customs of non-English-speaking societies can lay the groundwork for language mastery. At Jackson, this means sparking student interest by focusing curricular issues on such topics as toys and games and sports and recreation, in the languages studied.

While many improvement plans express compliance with this goal, its implementation is complicated. To add another major curricular unit without adding more hours to the school day is unlikely. While some schools, among them McDowell and Norwood, plan to add foreign language studies, others, including Swift and Jamieson, will offer a second language only in their after-school extended day or social center program.

Grissom intends to offer an incentive plan to encourage student interest in its foreign language program. At Burke, foreign language will be available only to those students currently at or above national norms in reading. Haugan has opted to explore funding possibilities before offering a foreign language at the school. Blaine will expand its Spanish classes.

The five magnet language academies demonstrate a variety of approaches. At Sayre, plans are being made to cut back on the number of minutes per week set aside for foreign language studies. Gallistel will expand the time spent on foreign languages. Murray will continue

to provide at least one trip abroad for foreign language students each year. An after-school Japanese Club is also being organized. At the same time, Murray has discontinued German and will exchange its German teacher for a computer education teacher.

The Sayre School Improvement Plan raises an issue not addressed elsewhere. The Board of Education does not provide extra funding to the language academies for the purchase of foreign language books, materials, or listening equipment. In encouraging Chicago's schools to create new foreign language programs, this goal brings forward the questions of funding, finding skilled language teachers, and making time in an already crowded curriculum for language lessons. For most Chicago elementary schools, this is a new curricular area, and the question of resources becomes paramount.

**GOAL 12:** ***Student awareness of, interest in, and exposure to fields such as journalism, drama, art, music, dance, and visual arts are increased in such a manner that creative expression and response to the artistic expression of others are fostered.***

Bradwell's plan expresses the importance of the arts: "Education is incomplete without the arts. Arts assure the cultural future [and] liberate the positive energy of young people."

The beauty which the arts add to the school environment can go a long way toward making the school inviting and enjoyable for students and staff. The arts can be a channel for expression of national, ethnic, or cultural heritage as well as for individual expression. It is no wonder that a great majority of the plans displays a genuine thirst for the arts.

Fine arts education was decimated in Chicago's elementary schools during the financial difficulties of the 1970s. In August of 1989, the Interim Board of Education approved restoration of half-time music or art teachers to elementary schools, setting the stage for the reconstruction of an arts program. The School Improvement Plans document the eagerness of the schools to begin rebuilding fine arts programs after a decade of neglect.

It is a high priority of many plans to add the other half of their music or art teacher. Secondly, many schools wish for at least a half-time teacher in the field they have none. Revere's plan calls for the hiring of more than one art teacher, while Farren has created the new staff position of Fine Arts Director. A parent will receive a stipend from state Chapter 1 funds to serve as a part-time art teacher at Locke.

Some schools have opted to use their state Chapter 1 monies for the arts. Shoop will fund vocal music and art for all its students. It has also applied for a grant from the Illinois Arts Council for additional funding. Other schools are applying for fine arts grants from philanthropic institutions.

Most schools are eager to expand arts programs. Those emphasizing the visual arts (painting, graphic arts, pottery, mural art, and television and film production) express an acute need for separate classroom space. At this stage in the rebuilding of the arts program, other elementary schools are looking for more modest make-and-take art project kits or "art on a cart" which the instructor moves from room to room throughout the day.

School art galleries are among the new features planned for Dyett, Johnson, and Peterson. Schools planning to hold fine arts fairs or festivals include Burke, Cook, Oriole Park, Parkside, Powell, Revere, and Schmid. Gale will hold its fine arts fair in cooperation with the local Chamber of Commerce.

At Jamieson, the plan directs teachers to make at least one of their field trips each year to a cultural institution or performance related to the fine arts curriculum. Children-in-the-Park is where Courtenay's students will receive arts exposure in a cooperative program with the local Park District fieldhouse.

Norwood Park and Young elementary plan to use the Art Smart program, while Foster Park and Gale will offer more intensive art training on a weekly basis to selected students exhibiting talent in the arts in grades one through eight. Jackson's students will be working with artists from the Chicago Public Art Group, Inc., to create a mosaic on their new outdoor play sculpture.

Music rooms, listening laboratories, and dance floors were among the physical enhancements sought by Franklin. Gale's third through eighth graders will benefit from the Music House program, while Earhart will continue its Merit Music program. Poe plans to integrate music theory into its music program at all levels. Jackson will introduce a keyboard music program, sponsored by Yamaha, for all students in grades one to eight.

There's a recorder revival at Sayre. For schools lacking resources this inexpensive and easily mastered wind instrument is a good choice. Others include rhythm bands such as that at Oglesby. Now that

personnel are available to lead them, choral music programs are planned at Haugan, Schmid, and Oglesby. At Brennemann, a third and fourth grade chorus is being organized with the assistance of the Chicago Children's Chorus.

Larger sums are being allocated at Ryerson to bring professional performing arts troupes to the school. Urban Gateways is a frequent choice for in-school performances. Students at de Diego, Edison, Gallistel, Greeley, Sayre, Thorp, and many others will receive visits in the next year.

Over the past decade, without professional arts instructors, many schools relied on volunteers to help classroom teachers with art enrichment programs. Numerous PTA chapters offered Picture Lady or Art Volunteers in the Classroom sessions to help expose students to the classical works. Some schools give art volunteers a stipend. The Raster Branch School Improvement Plan takes art seriously and stipulates that art volunteers be professionals trained in their field.

In schools with full academic program and multiple support programs, how can arts instruction command a fair share of instructional time? Some schools extend the school day, with enrichment arts classes being offered before or after school. Examples of this approach occur at Gale and Jamieson. Other schools, including McDowell, use the park district and community agencies, such as Gads Hill Community Center, to supplement their own program.

Students and staff from Kennedy-King College will be asked to help Cook students with an annual dramatic production in which all grades will participate. Another cooperative arrangement has students from Norwood Park and Dirksen receiving weekly ballet classes from visiting members of the USA Ballet Company.

A school with a unique approach to music appreciation is Peck, which plans to present a course in the history of pop music from the 1950's to the present. Students at Everett will make a field trip to a recording studio, where they will meet technical personnel as well as artists at work.

**GOAL 13:** ***Sufficient staff and facility resources will be provided for students with special needs, including students eligible for federal Chapter 1, state Chapter 1, bilingual education, and special education, as well as students with special needs that are not served in the regular classroom.***

FEDERAL ESEA CHAPTER 1

ESEA Chapter 1 is a large federally-funded program in the Chicago Public Schools, providing more than $100 million dollars annually. The funds support programs in the most economically deprived schools in the city, both public and non-public. Those schools are required to use the funds to provide supplementary instruction to students in greatest educational need.

The instructional programs supported by ESEA Chapter 1 are of two types: augmented staffing, in which a regular classroom is halved in size, with Chapter 1 providing the second teacher; and pullouts, in which students receive support in reading or mathematics for (usually) one period per day from a specialist or resource teacher. Variations on the pullout theme include instruction from an itinerant specialist within the regular classroom, extended day programs before or after school, and the Reading Recovery program in which a highly trained reading specialist conducts intensive one-on-one reading instruction with a first grader until the student performs at the level of the class. Chapter 1 also funds full-day kindergartens at many schools, as well as 24 Child-Parent Centers.

In the 1989-90 school year, five elementary schools and one high school with poverty levels exceeding 75 percent took advantage of changes in the federal legislation to conduct school-wide Chapter 1 projects. They used the ESEA Chapter 1 dollars to support programs serving all the school's students, not just the educationally most needy. Attucks' plan states "The federal Chapter 1 funds allocated for 1990-91 were designed to support the school-wide project which includes

additional staff, [a] computer laboratory, and related services. . . . Five teachers, five teacher aides and one school community representative are provided by these funds." These funds are an important component of Attucks' vision that it "will become a model of excellence for schools serving disadvantaged pupils and a center of pride for the community."

ESEA Chapter 1 programs are integral to many school improvement plans, regardless of the size of their allocations. Initiatives at Bontemps, Mollison, and Randolph will use Chapter 1 funds to improve reading, mathematics, science, and language arts. Peabody will reduce its retention rate by making intervention and remediation programs available to its students under the ESEA umbrella. Mulligan needs "an ESEA Chapter 1 funded bilingual-bicultural resource teacher." Many schools, including Bright, DePriest, and South Loop use the support services available under ESEA (such as the school community representative) to improve student attendance and to increase parental involvement.

McCosh's plan proudly notes that its "ESEA Language Arts and Mathematics Labs for the intermediate and upper grades offer a comprehensive program and are showing gains for students." Fernwood uses these funds to create "a strong instructional program including ESEA and LD classes in which there is a continuum of the presentation of skills." Sumner considers itself the equal of any school and better than most: its plan says of its Chapter 1 programs, "Reading Recovery is a state model, better than most; ESEA computer lab scored #1 in the city in reading and mathematics, better than most."

Goldblatt's typing laboratory, purchased with Chapter 1 money, is obsolete. The school proposes using Chapter 1 funds to purchase a computerized writing laboratory and reading and mathematics laboratories. During the second year of the plan, Project CANAL funds will buy additional equipment for the laboratories so that a full class can use them at one time. All of Howe's instructional staff, including those funded by ESEA Chapter 1, will teach or tutor reading from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Monday through Thursday. This time on Fridays is set aside for recreational reading. Bontemps wants to "expand the ESEA

lab to include reading and math with greater concentration on reading and math in the primary level."

Copernicus' plan demonstrates the LSC's commitment to academic excellence. "During the next three years we shall continue to chart the progress of our special needs children to determine if the [ESEA] Chapter 1 programs are continuing to have a positive impact. If not, we will devise different solutions." The plan notes there will be "changes in classroom practice to accompany the reduction in [class] size."

Copernicus' staff intend to counter any negative effects of homogeneous grouping that sometimes occur in augmented staffing classrooms by combining "reductions with intelligent regrouping of students so that all classes have enough resources to learn productively." The school will "develop appropriate opportunities for interclass contacts on a regular basis so that a broadened social milieu still exists." To complete the plan, inservice training "on the use of cooperative learning with smaller groups" is planned.

Coordinating the categorical and the regular program creates problems and possibilities. The Deneen plan, for instance, emphasizes that "there is a need to have half-day [inservices] scheduled to allow staff to assess progress or lack of progress. Also, time is needed to correlate subjects with special programs, i.e. ESEA."

## Bilingual Education

Transitional bilingual programs are mandated by the State of Illinois. The number of limited-English-proficient students from the same language background at a school determines the type of bilingual program. A bilingual education program is required if there are 20 or more limited-English-proficient students from the same language background. Classroom teachers who know the students' language and culture work with these students in their home language, developing English language proficiency through instruction in English as a second language, improving their native language arts skills, and teaching about both cultures. If there are fewer than 20 limited-English-proficient

*students of the same language background at the school, they receive* a transitional program of instruction which provides educational support services to the students. In either case, the students go into the all-English program of instruction when they are able to function well in the regular program.

Approximately 42,000 students were enrolled in bilingual education programs in 300 of Chicago's elementary and secondary schools in school year 1989-90. These students spoke more than 120 languages, with Spanish being by far the most common.

Many of the school improvement plans complain of the shortage of bilingual-endorsed teachers. In discussing its staffing pattern, Haugan's plan says "there is a need for more bilingual Spanish teachers to fully staff the school." Armour states "there is also a great need for additional bilingual personnel to organize the bilingual program. . . . A position has been created. This position has been advertised but is still unfilled." Dawes adds that "primary classrooms have one-third to one-half of the children in need of bilingual programs and at this time we do not have sufficient teachers to provide this." Locke, on the other hand, expected to be able to offer bilingual program services to its Italian students.

***The need for more bilingual teachers***

To address the special needs of limited-English-proficient students, schools are hiring parent volunteers, bilingual aides, tutors, and other support personnel with state Chapter 1 and other categorical funds. Audubon is hiring a Spanish bilingual school coordinator and paying for translation services from its discretionary funds. Boone is looking for an outside consultant to assess its bilingual program. Yates, speaking of its summer plans, points out that "bilingual tutors will maximize the effectiveness of monolingual teachers." The plan at King elementary states "we will continue present programs if funds are provided, [and] in addition, we will add bilingual auxiliary personnel." Pullman has a sure-fire method to attract parents to the school by providing English classes taught by Chicago City Colleges staff.

An innovative form of bilingual education is the dual language school with an emphasis on two-way language instruction and other programs which maintain first-language skills. Inter-American and Sabin both operate dual language programs.

Several schools have integrated bilingual education within the academic and non-academic goals of their school improvement plans. Pilsen's plan addresses the needs of the bilingual student as an integral part of, not separate from, the regular program of instruction. Bateman's staff development plans include a focus, for all staff, on special strategies and methods to use for limited-English-proficient students in the content areas. Barry and Peabody provide model bilingual programs in which limited-English-proficient students, when practical, are mainstreamed with non-LEP students. The heterogeneous groupings contribute to the students' development. Yates will purchase science texts and materials for bilingual classes "to assure that concepts in science are provided for multicultural and bilingual students."

A structural approach to bilingual and other programs will take place at Seward. According to its plan, "The establishment of three educational divisions will form the key component for the development of curriculum, the monitoring of the academic and non-academic programs, and the coordination and communication necessary to advance the education climate of the school."

### Special Education

Students are placed in special education programs because their handicaps or impairments require modification to the curriculum or to instruction. Special education services vary but basically fall into three types of programs.

The first type provides pull-out programs and resource rooms for mildly and moderately handicapped students and self-contained classrooms for students with more severe handicaps. In most school improvement plans special education students receive little attention. Plans at schools which house some special education classes tend to reiterate the rules

and regulations already in effect. However, the Holden and Revere plans indicate that special education classes are not always welcome tenants: a school may wish to place the needs of the local community before that of special education students who do not live there. Reinberg is one school that is more welcoming to out-of-area special education students.

A second type of special education service is in schools dedicated to the needs of special education students. These schools share the view of the reform legislation that each child needs an appropriate and stimulating environment to achieve her or his potential. Their councils view staff as highly dedicated and capable. The primary concerns are safety, physical conditions, staff development and preparation, and funding. Spalding's plan is concerned that parents of special education students become a more integral part of the larger school community.

Mainstreaming is the concept that special education students should spend more of their time in with regular students in regular classrooms. This is a concern for these schools. Examples include Beard's desire to add a kindergarten or pre-kindergarten for regular children. The school also plans to make its language arts and mathematics instruction more community-based since, the plan says, its students will learn better in a naturalistic environment. Stock, a school for physically handicapped students, seeks "reverse mainstreaming." Its staff feel that enrolling some children who are not handicapped will be beneficial to both populations.

The third type of special education service is the home-hospital program. When a child is too ill or otherwise unable to attend school, he or she will receive the services of an itinerant teacher. This teacher works with the student in the hospital or home and provides a valuable link to the ongoing curriculum which the student would otherwise miss.[15]

Blair wants to develop a report card more appropriate for its special education students. Blair will provide the children and their parents

[15]There are also tuition and dual enrollment plans to meet the needs of certain special education students. These were not discussed in any plans.

with role models and information about job opportunities for disabled persons. Buckingham's plan calls for enhancement of the learning disabilities program by the addition of System-80 programmed learning equipment and materials. At Powell a staff committee will try to improve coordination between the special education and regular classroom programs.

**GOAL 14:** ***High school students are offered all courses necessary to comply with the State Board of Higher Education's college entrance criteria, effective in 1993, and the percentage of students taking and successfully completing such courses increases.***

Students enrolling in an Illinois college or university in 1993 must have successfully completed at least 15 units of high school work. These will have to include four years of English, three of social studies, three of mathematics (including advanced algebra, geometry, and trigonometry or computer programming), three of laboratory science, and two years of electives in foreign language, music, vocational education, or art.

The typical Chicago public school graduate now falls short of the 1993 requirements by one year in mathematics and two years in science unless these were taken as electives. Fewer than half of the high school students were enrolled in a science class last semester.

Statistics from the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor show that most jobs require at least two years of college. Yet, only about 20 percent of the high school improvement plans speak to this goal. Some of the schools which do address it present only vague plans.

The vocational high schools concentrate on developing curricula which will prepare their students for employment after graduation from high school--not for college enrollment.

Some high schools such as Lindblom and Lincoln Park plan to offer a fifth major to students to help them meet college entrance requirements. Lincoln Park plans to concentrate most of its curriculum on college preparatory course work and instruction.

## GOAL 15: *Student-counselor ratio of 250 to 1 is established in the high schools and at least one counselor is placed in every elementary school for the 1989-90 school year.*

Twenty-two percent of the plans had something to say about this goal. Two comments were typical: either this goal is the responsibility of the Board of Education or the school desires more counseling services than it receives under the current guidelines.

In the 1989-90 school year, there were 324.5 quota counselors assigned in the high schools. The high schools used their categorical and other discretionary funds to staff another 79.3 positions for a district student-counselor ratio of 248:1. With the help of the schools, the legislation's goal was met. That same year there were 414.5 counselor positions staffed in the elementary schools. The schools funded another 17.5 positions. There was at least one counselor, although not a full-time one, in each elementary school.

Nevertheless, the desire for additional counseling staff is clear in both elementary and high school plans. Counselors, especially in the elementary schools, must piggy-back in a number of positions because of the shortage of staff and the wide range of duties they perform.

Some schools report having counselors on a half-time basis only. Sometimes they seek to remedy this by using their state Chapter 1 monies to pay the additional half-salary needed to secure a full-time counselor. The Edgebrook plan states they are doing this "under duress." The plan argues that funding should come from central coffers, not from the school's discretionary funds.

## GOAL 16: *All school staff and volunteers are provided an appropriate staff development program that is tied to the priority goals, objectives, and activities specified in the plan.*

The amount and quality of staff development varies widely from school to school. Some plans give extensive examples of the types of training that will be provided over the three years of the plan. Others give only vague descriptions. Some schools elaborate on plans to send teachers to advanced training to learn new approaches to teaching content areas. Others emphasize refining instruction in fine arts, computer, or critical thinking skills.

Most schools would agree with the Clissold plan's opinion that the schools should work to "make each school year a motivational, creative experience" for staff as well as students. But how to accomplish this?

Gompers plans to bring the entire staff back three days before the official opening of school for intensive inservice and planning sessions at a reduced rate of pay. McDade is exploring the possibility of offering an extra half-day in-service for evaluation of progress in student achievement and what changes need to be made.

Gresham plans to provide substitutes so teachers may receive staff development in instructional areas. All teachers are urged to take part in at least one training program at a conference or university each school year. Wirth will release teachers from regular duties to attend workshops and seminars, while encouraging them to become endorsed in new subjects.

White plans special teacher training on proposal writing. Peirce will pay teachers stipends of $20 per hour to serve on a curriculum committee for 25 weeks. The committee will evaluate and rewrite the curriculum. Mayer provides on-going training in conjunction with DePaul University and also specialized training in an assertive discipline program. LaSalle will encourage teachers to visit other schools to observe new teaching techniques and programs.

Burbank's plan adds a goal for administrative improvement. The principal is expected to master a number of skills and will be subject to an individual assessment by a State of Illinois Leadership Analyst and Administrative Mentor. At Edison, the LSC has agreed that the principal will complete professional education programs annually.

Niños Heroes sums up well the sentiments apparent in many other schools' plans: "By the end of each school year, all those who are employed by the school will also have received education here."

## GOAL 17: *Individual teachers are granted the professional authority to make decisions about instruction and the method of teaching.*

The role of the teacher has changed from the days when teachers were hired to follow guidelines, teach the three R's, the basic catechism, and a little history. As part of the changes taking place in the Chicago Public Schools, two teachers now sit on each LSC and any number of them within a school may serve on the PPAC. They are both a resource for the school community to draw upon and the primary agent in the classroom to make school reform successful.

The Aldridge plan stresses one aspect of this change: "the excitement of school reform is an invitation to explore and innovate. Our teaching staff will be a most important cog in the discovery and implementation of a revitalized school system." The McDowell plan points out another aspect: teacher authority must be exercised within "a common direction, using well-defined norms." In other words, teachers require autonomy within the classroom but must exercise their rights within the limits set by the agreed purpose and policies of the school.

Schools varied in how they used teachers to help write the improvement plans: some gathered survey results from needs assessments, some asked teachers to share their views in drafting the school's vision statement, the PPACs at others made recommendations to the principal or the LSC, and still others divided staff into committees to work on goal statements and curriculum plans. Chicago Vocational involved all its staff in writing its plan. Eleven "quality improvement teams" were set up. This team process, according to the plan, engages and encourages the participation of all members of the school community.

Hyde Park is borrowing the concept of "quality circles" from industry. The circles will meet throughout the year, continually adjusting instruction, the curriculum, and the school's programs to better meet the needs of the students.

Sixty percent of the plans did not discuss this goal. Few school improvement plans explicitly granted individual teachers the authority to decide about instruction and the method of teaching. On the other hand, none denied them this right. The Project CANAL core planning teams shared decision-making to plan and implement school improvement activities. They used such techniques as brainstorming and consensus building to determine if modifications of the school's goals and objectives were necessary.[16]

The writers of Johnson's plan felt that if teachers were encouraged to participate in training that helps them become more proficient at what they already do, they will become more confident and willing to try a greater variety of approaches. They make the assumption that, if teachers are given the autonomy to make decisions about instructional methods, they will find effective and creative ways to teach. The plan encourages creativity in the classroom by providing small grants for individual classroom programs and innovative projects.

Most schools that did include this goal in their plans hope to accomplish it by providing more time for grade or departmental meetings for planning and sharing sessions. Gresham's preparation periods will be scheduled so that teachers in the same grade have free periods scheduled at the same time. The PPAC is expected to recommend additional time to allow teachers to share ideas. At Bond, teachers will form subject area and school activity committees and assume responsibility for planning, initiating, monitoring and evaluating specific areas of concern. The plan sets aside some funds for the committee members to be paid to meet after-school.

McDowell will provide staff development to ensure that its teachers are better informed and prepared to deliver all aspects of the curriculum and thus more able to make decisions about instruction and teaching. Edison and LaSalle are encouraging their teachers to explore innovative methods of instruction by arranging opportunities to visit classrooms in other schools to observe the teaching there. Aldridge's teachers will analyze the strengths of the existing educational programs at the school

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[16]Project CANAL distributed a model for preparing school improvement plans which some schools followed. However, this goal on teachers' professional authority and autonomy appears not to have been included.

and will be free to design pilot programs in their classrooms geared to making teaching more effective. De Diego will add a preparation period each week for planning and collaboration. The school will provide each teacher with a $100 stipend to purchase classroom materials.

Cardenas will video-tape its teachers to help them become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The teachers will critique their own strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their instruction.

## GOAL 18: *Parental involvement in the education of their children increases.*

The welcome mat is out in front of Chicago's schools. There is consensus about the need to increase parental involvement. Building of the partnership between school and home is a key to the success of school reform in Chicago. And in this area the school improvement plans have no shortage of good ideas.

Several school improvement plans analyze the reasons for past shortcomings in parent involvement. Parents were frequently treated like intruders in the schoolhouse. The plans want to overcome this, but acknowledge that changes in the attitude of school staff is not all that is needed. Some parents may still feel like strangers in the school or may be embarrassed by their own lack of education. Many who would like to spend more time at school, but they may have work conflicts.

Stockton is organizing a Welcome Wagon team to greet new families and make them feel part of the school family. At McDowell, parent-child projects will involve reading a book together and then together giving a book review to the child's class. Special father and son sports events are also planned. A breakfast prepared by the children will be a special event for the parents one morning in each classroom. Parents will join teachers to work on a school climate committee at Jackson. This committee will monitor the school's program in character development and extracurricular activities.

Involving parents more in social events is the thrust at Franklin. Parents will organize at least one social event for each classroom. These will be held off the school grounds and may include a bowling night for parents and children or a potluck supper. The school also requires that parents, as well as staff and LSC members, wear name tags at all events to help break the ice. Franklin's catalogue of job descriptions will give parent volunteers a better understanding of the school's needs.

Hartigan is helping arrange family museum memberships and visits. It also plans to schedule LSC and other meeting times in the early morning, late afternoon, and evening, in order to accommodate parents' work schedules. Lovett, recognizing the role children can play in shaping their parents' behavior, is treating the two classrooms which have the highest parent attendance at the monthly LSC meetings to pizza at lunch.

The Backpack Express campaign at Decatur stresses the importance of communication between home and school, reminding parents to check the contents of their children's backpacks daily. A Design-A-Folder contest will be held for the folders that carry messages to parents. Inside those backpacks will be the weekly *Good News* bulletin, full of praise for students' successes. To ensure communication, the budget for parent involvement at McDowell includes a maintenance contract for the copying machine. Cook plans to organize a student committee to work on parent involvement. Fathers of Shoop is a new booster club there.

Barnard wants a parent or family member of each child to work one day per semester as a volunteer. Bradwell will offer parents a day at camp with their children. Ross is one of several schools using state Chapter 1 funds to hire a parent organizer or volunteer coordinator, to stimulate parent involvement. At Bradwell, stipends are being offered to parent volunteers who work in the school.

Gunsaulus and de Diego will add a third report card pick-up day to increase parent participation. On report card pick-up days at Cuffe, a parent hospitality table will be set up. Some schools are experimenting with contracts binding parents to observe their obligations to the school and their children. Schools planning these include Franklin, Garvy, Spry, and Taft. Parents will read, discuss, and sign these agreements at the beginning of each school year.

Powell will produce an orientation video for use by new parents, while Decatur will match up parents new to the school with experienced ones in a buddy system. Norwood Park plans to reach out to the parents of students bused to the school from outside the attendance area.

An Academy Awards night will honor Lovett's most involved parents. Parents will accompany their children to the stage at student awards ceremonies to be honored for their help and encouragement. Hefferan and Hinton plan special parent rooms to underline the fact that parents do indeed belong in the school.

Many schools celebrate the special events observed by the various language and culture groups that make up the student body. Hanson Park's plan, for instance, points to the importance of Mother's Day and the *Cinco de Mayo* holidays for its Hispanic students. It hopes to use these to draw parents to the school to plan festival celebrations, teach the history in their culture of these holidays, sample special foods, and share arts.

Jahn's plan notes that staff complain parents "loiter" in the teachers' lounge, lunchroom, auditorium, and security desk, an implied criticism of some parent involvement. Several schools are addressing the issue of how to make parent participation meaningful.

**GOAL 19:** ***Parents are provided training as to how they can assist children at home in preparing them to learn effectively.***

Many schools are offering classes for parents during and after school hours. At Stowe, a homework class for parents is planned. Evening counseling for parents and students will occur at Guggenheim, along with a Male Responsibility program. Stockton's parent training efforts include parents teaching parents about what works at home.

Workshops on a wide variety of topics ranging from household budget planning to stress management to assertive discipline will be available to parents of Terrell students. English as a second language classes will be offered to parents at Brennemann, Stowe, and other schools. Kenwood will hold conflict resolution training for its parents and students. Aldridge will offer classes to parents on combating stress and on motivating the black male child.

Davis Developmental Center will offer a parent course in early childhood education of the handicapped. Its aim is to enable parents of children with disabilities to be more effective in preparing their children for school.

Several schools will make use of outside assistance to improve their training of parents. Ryerson, for instance, works with DePaul University's Partnership Program.

## GOAL 20: *Participation and support of community residents, business organizations, and other local institutions and individuals increases.*

Most school improvement plans view community organizations and businesses as funding sources, potential donors, and sources of guidance or future employment. In several instances, complaints about the off-campus, post-dismissal behavior of students have led to cool relations between a school and its neighbors. Rarely is a reciprocal relationship described, at least at the elementary level.

Service to the community by students is not often seen in the plans. Exceptions include Jackson's plan, listing clothing and food drives for charity. Oriole Park plans to invite local business men and women to coffee hours. An interesting way to say thank you is the Taste of Haugan which will feature the culinary variety available among the students, the parents, and the community.

Some schools are polishing their public relations efforts. Franklin plans a brochure about the school, intended for distribution to local businesses. Thorp has a similar idea and will appoint a community relations specialist. Edison is considering a city-wide effort. At West Pullman, students will write letters to neighborhood businesses and organizations, introducing themselves and their school.

Other schools are considering a greater service role to the community. McCormick staff will help parents and community members with immigration law, document translation, and finding medical care.

Relationships to local business and political figures are addressed by several plans. McDowell will invite representatives of the 87th Street Business Association to its annual weekend retreat. Garvy hopes to place a staff member on the local Chamber of Commerce. It will buy more of its supplies from local businesses, encouraging its students, parents, and staff to do the same. The Peterson LSC is trying to get one of its members a seat on the local neighborhood association board.

The Jamieson and Peterson plans target real estate firms doing business in their area. They want these firms to publicize the schools' academic reputations and variety of offerings. Sauganash plans a permanent liaison to the local alderman's office.

**CURRICULUM:** ***The key assumptions and directions of the school's curriculum and its programs and an explanation of how they will further the goals of the plan.***

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It is clear from the plans that many principals, LSC members, teachers, and parents have thought long and hard over the goals they expect their schools to meet. A sense of local determination of what the school and its curriculum should look like is apparent.

This sense can only be expected to grow. In spring 1990 when the plans were written, most LSCs concentrated on the structure and organization of their schools. Debates over the contents of the curriculum and methods of teaching were in many cases deferred until a principal was hired, the budget settled, the staff met, the parents listened to.

If the schools do what the plans say they will, there will soon come to be real differences from one Chicago public school to the next.

Sullivan High plans a year-long review of its mission which will involve students and staff in seminars reflecting on the school's goals and addressing its educational purpose. This is one manifestation of the seriousness schools bring to school reform. As the Niños Heroes plan expresses it, "This school is not just one of many that our children will attend, it is the basis of all learning that will take place hereafter."

Earhart, Ross, and Tilton plan to make their curricular offerings more Afrocentric. Strengthening students' appreciation of their own heritage while enriching their knowledge of other cultures and values appears over and over in the plans.

LaSalle wishes to evaluate student progress more precisely than the letter-grade procedure now used in Chicago. It will petition the Board of Education for a waiver to permit the use of report cards with numerical grades.

At Reinberg, the plan makes clear that the school wishes to continue to operate as it has in the past. McDowell strongly adheres to the standard Chicago curriculum and to instruction founded on basal readers and student workbooks. Locke's plan contends that it is best for its students to keep special programs to a minimum so that time on the basics is maximized.

Character education and other moral dimensions appear in several plans. Both Gresham and Whistler plan to include character education strands in their curricula. Grissom has plans to "instill pride in the American way of life" and to "bring God back into the school."

Some schools stress more practical concerns. Kanoon, for instance, thinks it important to help students develop a clear conception of successful work behavior, attitudes, and a sense of responsibility. This orientation is seen in many other schools' plans as well.

**STAFFING AND RESOURCES:** ***An analysis of the school's staffing pattern and material resources.***

Many plans express pride in their teachers. Several call for additional teachers, typically specialists such as counselors, art or music teachers, or bilingual teachers. Most of the plans do not offer a review of the staff's strengths, weaknesses, or deployment in any comprehensive sense. Few explain how current staffing patterns will enhance the aims of the plan.

Several schools want teacher attendance to improve. Others recognize teacher attendance as a vital aspect of student achievement. Schools with relatively high teacher absenteeism also report low staff morale. High levels of stress among teachers can also take their toll in physical illness.

Some schools address teacher attendance by offering incentives and awards. Some recognize excellent staff attendance with gift certificates donated by area stores and restaurants. Another common award is the opportunity to attend professional meetings during school time.

Burke is one of several schools which will publish the names of staff with perfect daily attendance and present them with awards. Cuffe proposes to improve its substitute teacher situation and to investigate "suspicious" absences of teachers.

Lovett, recognizing the role of parents in shaping children's attendance patterns, has extended its attendance reform to parents. The two classrooms which have the highest parent attendance at the monthly LSC meetings will be treated to pizza at lunchtime.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:** ***Teachers' work in a professional environment conducive to fulfilling their responsibilities and ensuring them the time and opportunity to incorporate new ideas and techniques into their work.***

The writers of the plans repeatedly worry over working conditions at the schools. Overcrowding, class size, repair, and maintenance are concerns that are addressed over and over. Many schools have no faculty lounges or planning rooms, either because of lack of space or because the rooms are in desperate need of repair. Equipment and supply shortages are mentioned frequently. Far fewer plans discuss making the teacher's workday and workplace more professional, productive, effective, and satisfying.

But the greatest complaint is class size. According to the plans there are simply too many students and too few teachers on any given day. This problem is compounded by old, outdated, crowded, and poorly repaired buildings. There is not enough usable space for the necessary number of classes in many schools, let alone space to lower class size for better productivity in the classroom. Time and again, the plans document teachers teaching in cloak rooms, basements, hallways, auditoriums, stages, and gymnasiums.

A large number of schools use this topic to discuss ways they might improve the appearance of their buildings and grounds and to increase staff and student safety. Saucedo's goal statement reads: "Students will develop pride and respect in their school." They will accomplish this in part by taking responsibility. Each classroom will appoint two beautification monitors who will check washrooms and other areas daily for graffiti and vandalism. Dvorak will hire a security monitor and all personnel will be asked to share in the responsibility to keep the school clean and safe.

There are positive examples of teacher appreciation in some of the plans. Several schools are offering stipends to teachers to work

extended hours towards reviewing and restructuring the school curriculum. Other schools are offering stipends for staff development classes or for training their PPAC members. In some cases the stipends are larger than the traditional $8 per hour, a very welcome sign of appreciation of teachers' work.

Neil's plan is one of several concerned that staff be prepared and resourceful. It points out that the "Central Office should provide more opportunities [to strengthen the] PPACs which in turn can develop sustaining programs and provide for professional development among all teachers."

Field's plan states that the school will request a waiver from the Chicago Teachers Union to permit staggering the working hours of the teaching staff.[17] This will increase flexibility in scheduling classes and permit extended hours for special attention to students' needs before and after the normal school day.

[17]At the time this document was completed, November 1990, the CTU had received 19 requests for waivers. All have been approved.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:** ***Enhance educational opportunities for all students.***

The schools which explicitly address equal educational opportunity explicitly usually say that all their educational programs and activities are open to all students.[18] Many schools emphasize they follow state and federal guidelines with respect to students who are disabled, economically disadvantaged, or do not speak English.

Hefferan wants to be sure that the curriculum presents females in non-traditional roles. White's plan states that girls should not be intimidated by careers which are male-dominated and that boys should consider occupations which are currently female-dominated. At Aldridge, the number of girls-only and boys-only assemblies will be balanced. Bass will stress male responsibility to its boys. Many schools mention the desirability of equal opportunity in extracurricular programs. At Sauganash, all sports are available to all children and co-educational teams exist for all but contact sports.

Peabody's plan points out that men and women on the faculty will have equal opportunity in hiring and promotion. LaSalle notes that a larger percentage of its applicants is female and that it will make an effort to enroll more boys.

As mentioned in the discussion of Goal 13, if schools have students who qualify for bilingual services, schools are quick to avail themselves of all the non-quota staff to which these students are entitled. Most schools make an effort to include limited-English-proficient students in all programs, not excluding them on the basis of language.

The plans repeatedly show the efforts made to provide good educational services to special education students. The schools know the requirements and want to follow guidelines for staffing students who qualify

[18]Some of the schools' planning on this topic has been described under Goal 13.

without excluding them from the regular programs and activities. Field, for instance, mainstreams special education students as much as possible. However, like many other schools, it is unable to serve the physically handicapped adequately because of limitations imposed by the lack of proper facilities. Vanderpoel also mentions limited classroom space which prevents the use of additional teachers in existing programs.

Racial and economic minorities concern the schools too. Several schools mention helping students from low income families by reducing or waiving fees and field trip costs. Aldridge provides uniforms for those on athletic teams and clothing for the neediest.

Garvy wants to increase its ability to communicate with parents of minority students. Busing is part of the problem since it disrupts communications and makes it difficult for the bused students to participate in after-school activities. This adversely affects the school's sense of community. Scheduling more after-school type events at recess and lunch is one strategy. It also gives special attention to Black history and brotherhood activities.

Aldridge uses a teacher facilitator to schedule activities, events, and field trips to counter racial isolation. Vanderpoel uses its program to attract minority and non-minority students from the south side into an integrated setting. Through voluntary transfers, Mayer has a student population with three approximately equal racial groups. It plans to maintain that balance. Gershwin is making special plans to identify and serve minority students who are gifted.

**MONITORING THE PLAN:** ***The steps the local school council will undertake to monitor implementation of the plan on an ongoing basis.***

About 90 percent of the elementary and more than 80 percent of the high school improvement plans discuss procedures to check the progress of the plans. The best plans include lists of stages or events, in essence timelines, of what is to occur and then specify periodic monitoring steps.

One plan made clear that "the process must allow for adjustment, change and restructuring where indicated or as new needs arise. The process should not be static but [be] an active monitoring program that builds success into the plan."

The reform legislation places the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the school's improvement plan on the LSC.[19] Some plans do specify the LSC as the sole monitor. More commonly, schools add the principal to the list of those responsible. This occurred for instance at Waters and Wirth. However, this places the responsibility for both implementation and monitoring on the same person. Other schools, such as Aldridge and Nobel, give the PPAC some responsibility for monitoring. Some schools share the responsibility widely, as at Peabody where the LSC, PPAC, parents and students are all directed to implement, monitor, and evaluate the school improvement plan.

Project CANAL schools, such as Gale, sometimes designate the Core Planning Team as the monitor. At Brentano, the responsibility goes to the School-Based Management Team composed of the LSC, PPAC, PTA officers and others. Some schools undergoing program improvement under ESEA Chapter 1 also have a head start on planning and

[19]The legislation assigns the subdistrict superintendent the responsibility of monitoring the schools and councils. This includes identifying schools which fail to implement improvement plans or to comply with them.

plan monitoring. The Westcott monitoring plan, for instance, lists the ESEA Chapter 1 parent meetings as one group reviewing the progress of the plan. Sauganash includes the LSC, the principal, the LSC's planning committee, the curriculum committees, and the textbook committees. A few, like Darwin, have contracted with an external firm or agency to monitor their implementation.

Some plans specify individual roles and responsibilities. At LaSalle, each member of the LSC monitors one or more areas. They record their findings on a computerized data base, along with the plan's goals and objectives, activities, responsibilities, timelines, test scores and other information. The staff at Garvy reports individually to the principal and the LSC regarding the implementation of those areas of the plan for which each is responsible. The PPAC and team leaders report to the principal on plan implementation at Von Steuben Upper Cycle. Avondale's PPAC created committees for each goal and objective in the plan. These meet with the principal once each semester. The planning committee at White will meet monthly to review implementation.

The principal and the LSC chairperson at Casals intend to meet twice during the year to analyze the implementation of the plan. The two will establish a timetable for completion of the plan's objectives and devise a checklist to show the goals accomplished. A budget committee will analyze proposals and guidelines. This work will supplement the monthly reports delivered at the regular LSC meeting. Data sheets for each goal and objective in the plan are also being prepared at Von Steuben Upper Cycle.

Some schools will make the progress of implementation visible throughout the year and throughout the school. In the office at Bass there will be charts which show the progress made towards reaching the plan's goals. Cameron will chart the number of parent volunteers working in the school, display letters of commitment received from businesses, and list monthly parent and community activities. This information will be published in English and Spanish.